THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) The original Rate Contract for the year 1992-93 was valid upto 31.7.93. Advertised Tender Enquiry was floated on 9.3.93 by DGS&D for conclusion of Rate Contract for supply of plywood for the year 1993-94. The procedure provides for renewal of the Rate Contract sufficiently ahead of the expiry of the current Rate Contract to maintain continuity of Supply. This was duly complied with.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Does not arise.

Enhancing quality of Tobacco cultivation

1810. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to constitute a committee to identify and assist States to enhance the quality of tobacco cultivated in non-irrigated areas;

(b) if so, the details of this proposal; and

(c) if not, what alternative measures will be considered to enhance the quality of tobacco produced?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The question does not arise.

(c) In order to improve quality and yield of tobacco, the Tobacco Board has in hand the following schemes:—

(i) Balanced fertilization;

(ii) Pest and disease control

(iii) Topping and suckering

(iv) Sprinkler irrigation;

(v) Improvement of curing facilities;

(vi) Supply of pure and healthy seedlings:

(vii) Training of farmers at various stages of crop growth;

(viii) Monitoring quality through analysis of pesticide residue and leaf chemistry; and

(ix) Exploring new light soil areas suitable for producing good quality exportable tobacco.

Tobacco Farmers losing Registration with Tobacco Board

1811. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) how many tobacco farmers have lost their registration with Tobacco Board in 1992-93 and 1993-94;

(b) what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that the present rules are too inflexible, and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to make the present rules flexible to help farmers with regard to registration with Tobacco Board?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) (i) 7 tobacco farmers registered in 1991-92 did not get registration during 1992-93 season.

(ii) 35 tobacco farmers registered in 1992-93 did not get registration during 1993-94 season.

(b) The reasons for not according of registration to these farmers are as follows:—

(i) Non-payment of registration fee (14 growers in 1993-94).

(ii) Non clearance of tie-up loans arranged from Banks by Board in earlier seasons for producing tobacco (3 in 1992-93, 13 in 1993-94).

(iii) Applicant not possessing fit barn for curing tobacco (9 in 1992.93.6 in 1993-94).

(iv) Applicant involved in disputes regarding ownership of barn (2 in 1993-94).

(v) Mis-conduct of grower during auction (1 in 1992-93).

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.